

Newsletter of the

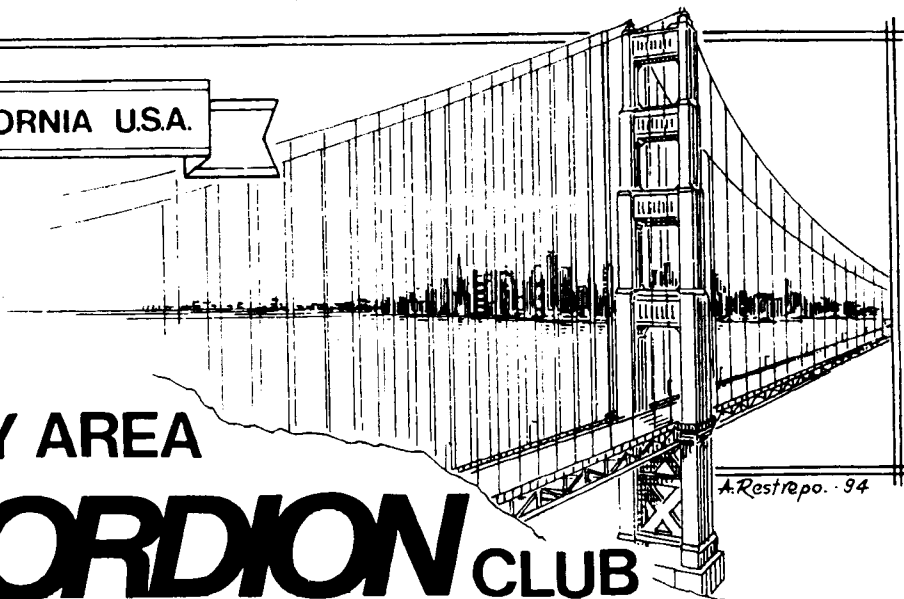
SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA U.S.A.



BAY AREA

ACCORDION CLUB

August, 1998



President's Message

by Marian Kelly

Dear Members and Friends,

As we approach the end of an unusually warm summer, the pace of local accordion events seems to be heating up too. I want to use this space to encourage all of you to participate in as many of these events as your schedule will possibly allow, because there'll be a lot of great squeezin' goin' on. You won't want to miss it!

The Redwood Club's annual picnic, which draws a great crowd, will be pleasant history by the time you read this, having taken place on August 15th. We hope that many of you attended and we're certain that their picnic was a wonderful success.

If you missed it, don't despair. Coming right up is the annual (eighth annual???) Cotati Accordion Festival, held in the main square of downtown Cotati, 40 miles north of San Francisco right on 101, on August 29th and 30th, 10 AM to 7PM both days. Nonstop accordion music, dancing, workshops, jamming....whatever kind of accordionizing suits you best. This newsletter has run details for the past two months, so I won't repeat them here.

As we told you last month, there will be no general meeting at Donworth Hall in September. However, there WILL be a meeting in San Jose, on the second Sunday, which is September 13th. Location is the Germania Restaurant, 261 N. 2nd Street (see little map on p. 3). Starting time is 3PM, and you are all most welcome to check it out....we think you'll find that you're hooked.

After that, the busy day will be one week later, on Sunday the 20th. Perhaps you've already seen some of the promotion for the Sandhill Road Soapbox Derby, to be held on Sandhill Road in Menlo Park on the morning of the 20th. The sponsors are working with the Guinness Book of Records and trying to set an accordion record at the derby....for largest number of accordions in one place playing the same song. The song, of course, is Lady of Spain. The Examiner did a story which talks a bit about Your Club and about accordions on Friday, Aug. 14th. And there promises to be considerable press and TV coverage in the next few weeks. Message to everybody: Get aboard. This is an EASY way to promote the accordion to the general public, which, of course, is our club's

Mark Your Calendars

NO SEPT. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING DUE TO LABOR DAY HOLIDAY! SEE YOU AT THE SAN JOSE MEETING ON SEPT. 13.

August 29-30. Cotati Accordion Festival, Cotati, Calif.

Sept. 8. (and every second Tuesday). Meeting of the Golden State Accordion-Aires. 7:00pm. Pietro's No.2. 679 Merchant St. Vacaville. Ca.

Sept. 9 (Wednesday). 7:30pm. BAAC Board Meeting at Ed Massolo's home at 612 Lassen in So. San Francisco. Guests welcome.

September 13 (Sunday). BAAC San Jose meeting. Germania Rest. 261 N. 2nd. St. 3:00pm to ? Bring your accordion! See page 3 for a map.

Sept. 13 and 27th (Sunday). Lou Jacklich Technique Workshop at BOAZ accordions in Oakland. Lou will teach practice and memorization techniques. 2:00pm-4:00pm.\$25 per day fee. Call 510-653-6983 for reservations.

September 20. BAAC Picnic at Nature Friends. Butters Dr. in Oakland. See page 5 for more info.

September 20. Sandhill Challenge in Menlo Park. See insert for more info.

Sept. 21 (and every third Monday). Meeting of the Accordion Club of the Redwoods. 7:00pm. Volpi's in Petaluma.

September 13-19. Joe Smiell's Intermediate and Advanced Button Box Camp, Norden, California. Call (510)832-6938 for more information.

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October 5 (Monday). BAAC General Meeting and 3rd annual Dessert Night. The theme is "Ethnic Night". Featuring Lenart Kulberg, Richard Yaus, Catherine Morshead, Joe Smiell Button Box Group and Roberto Rosa. Members bring dessert to share with 8 people (free coffee).

October 11 (Sunday). French music workshop with Henri DuCharme. 2:00-4:00pm. At BOAZ accordions in Oakland. \$25 fee. Call 510-653-6983 for reservations.

October 17. BAAC Annual Social Dinner and Dance at the Irish Cultural Center in San Francisco.

November 2 (Monday). BAAC General Membership Meeting at the Moose Lodge. The theme is "Harvest Festival Night" featuring two great bands...Steve Balich Band, Dominic Saso Band plus Frank Panacci and Ed Massolo strolling accordions. Finger Food and Free Coffee provided by BAAC. Bring your dancing shoes!

November 8 and 15th (Sunday). Mike Zampecini workshop on the Fundamentals of Jazz and Blues Improvisation. 2:00-4:00pm. At BOAZ accordions in Oakland. \$25 per day fee. Call 510-653-6983 for reservations.

BAAC Ensemble practice first and third Wednesday of each month at Moose Lodge in Daly City from 7:00pm-9:00pm. Contact Frank Montoro (650)574-4757 for additional information.

BAAC Fun Band practice fourth Wednesday of each month at Moose Lodge in Daly City from 7:00pm-9:00pm. Contact Tom Cordoni @ 415-333-5625 for more information.

Beginners Support Groups/Bands
East Bay 510-843-9958
San Francisco 415-673-8835
South Bay 408-258-1258

Please send Calendar Information to your Editor, using the address on the last page.

**BAAC Picnic
Sept. 20, 1998**

**BAAC Dinner at
Irish Cultural Center
Oct. 17, 1998**

AUGUST GENERAL MEETING

by Frank Schlotter and Bob Berta

Members at the August meeting were welcomed by the sweet tunes of Val Kieser which put everyone in the right mood. After socializing, the audience took their seats to be greeted by our M.C. for the night, Frank Schlotter. Frank asked President Marian Kelly to take the stage to announce all of the upcoming events (Cotati, club picnic, social dinner) and to ask everyone to put on their thinking caps for nominations to the BAAC board.

After the various business items were dispensed with the first group came on stage. This was a new, to BAAC, group called **Around The Corner**. This group is conducted by Valarie Morris and performs Valarie's own compositions. The members of the group are Sharon Walters, Val Kieser, Jean O'Malley, Linda Peach, Lynn Ewing and guest drummer Vernon Agoya. The first tune was *Around*

the Corner (the namesake of the group), followed by *Before the Storm*, *After the Storm* and concluded with *Sunnyside Up*. This last tune featured Sharon Walters on vocals and Jean O'Malley and Linda Peach on backup vocals and dancing for a very different act. This group was most interesting and the audience really enjoyed the compositions. It is nice to hear that someone is composing some new music for accordion that has excellent quality. If you are interested in hearing other music by Valarie you can obtain CDs, tapes, and sheet music of her compositions. Contact her on the Internet at VMorris@mvcomm.com or call 510-222-8442.



AROUND THE CORNER

A past performer who wowed the audience was Frank Lima who goes by the stage name of "Julio Morgani". Julio is a street performer in Santa Cruz. Evidently he was unable to attend so his sister, "Jessapina Morgani" filled in. Jessapina looked vaguely familiar...evidently mustaches run in their family. In any case she proved to be a very fine accordionist and excellent entertainer. Her comments kept us in stitches as she performed *DeCamanada, Cano*, a very spicely version of *Let Me Entertain You* and an encore performance of *Tutti*



JESSAPINA MORGANI

Benne. Hmmmm...wonder if she has ever considered playing duets with her brother?

Val Kieser provided more great music during the intermission which allowed everyone to find a refreshing soda to seek some relief from the hot summer night. After the intermission nominations for vacant board positions were taken from the floor to be added to the nominating committee's recommendations.



HERB MEIER

Due to a last minute cancelation, Herb Meier filled in with drummer Vernon Agoyan providing some nice percussion. Since Herb didn't have his accordion he borrowed Val Kiesers new Pignini. Evidently Herb didn't have any problem getting used to it as he performed neat arrangements of *O Marie* (an Italian waltz), *Julaida* (a Polish Polka) and *Erev Ba* which is a lovely ballad from Israel which translates to Night Comes. Herb is a professional with a fantastic knowledge of various ethnic styles of music...especially the dance rhythms of Latin America.

Last on stage was the much anticipated return of Frank Panacci. Frank is a favorite of BAAC because of his fine playing but also because of his untiring help and enthusiastic support of the club behind the scenes. Frank showed his musicianship and technique in his performances of *Las Altanitas* (Gay Ranchero), *La Danza*, *Granada* and *El Relicario*. Hopefully we will see more of Frank and perhaps his buddy, Ed Massolo, will join him again for some of their popular duets.



FRANK PANACCI

San Jose August Meeting a Success

by Dominic Palmisano

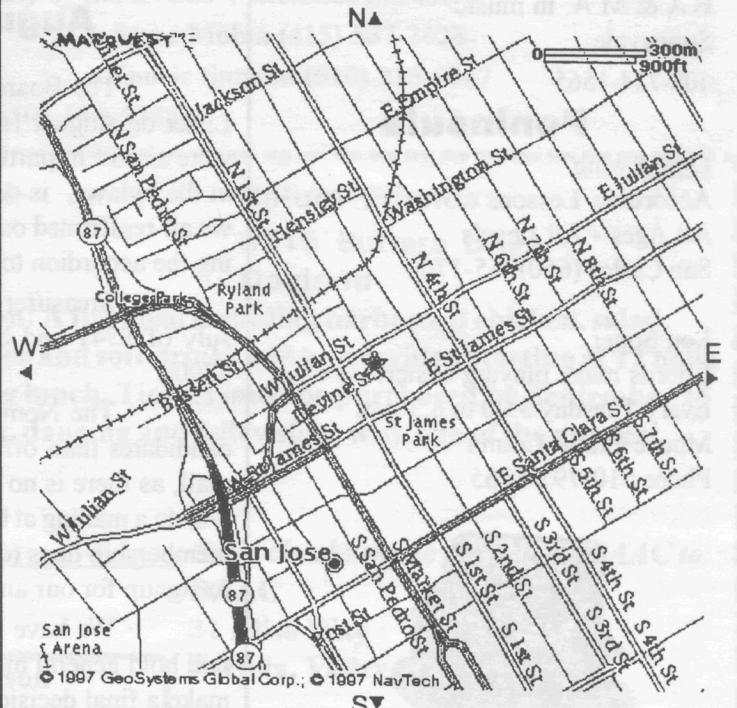
Want to have fun and enjoy a group of enthusiastic accordion lovers?

Come to BAAC's San Jose location for its third second-Sunday-of-the-month get-together at the Germania Restaurant. You will find yourself wanting to participate in playing your favorite songs and joining in on the jam session.

At the last meeting several players stood up (or sat) and displayed their talents; all were appreciated by the entire audience. Frank Lima (AKA Julio Morgani) played great nostalgic tunes on a 1930's Virtuoso. Tony Raymond played sweet music from Switzerland using three different button accordions. He also added yodeling effects that dazzled the group. Bill Demichelis and Bill Taponga played traditional accordion tunes that had the audience standing with applause. We had the wives of two accordionists join in with guitar and flute that was surprisingly well done. Finally, we had the sensational accordionist from Puerto Rico, Roberto Rosa, who knocked us out of our chairs with his amazing style and music selections. Every tune was pure pleasure to hear!

At the conclusion a jam session began with several players. The MC for the event was Arnie Krenn who allowed a very spontaneous atmosphere that encouraged all of us to play. One final note - the Germania Restaurant provides food and drink service during the event. Next meeting, Sept. 12th from 3:00 PM until ???

If you want to attend the next meeting the map printed below will help you find your way.



Time to renew your membership in BAAC
Dues notice will be going out soon.
Cost to renew for year is \$25

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 Petaluma
 707-769-8744

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Valarie Morris
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 MA in Music, Mills College
 (510)222-8442 or (510)222-6672

Lou Jacklich
 Private Lessons
 Transpose Arrange Chords
 50 years experience
 510-317-9510
 San Lorenzo

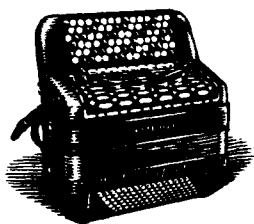
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Mike Zampiceni
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 B.A. & M.A. in music
 Sunnyvale
 408-734-1565

Peninsula

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 Moose Club - Colma
 Phone 510-792-8765



A CHROMATIC ACCORDION

mission. Very little work involved on our part. **JUST BE THERE.** We have a flyer about this event for each of you; if it can go into this newsletter without extra postage, we'll do that. If not, we're planning a mailing for the end of the month, and will include it at that time. We promise that you'll have a lot of fun checking out the inventive Soapbox Derby entries as well as helping to put accordions into the Guinness book!

Later that day (but not MUCH later), be sure to check out our new PICNIC site in the Oakland Hills. We've made an arrangement with the German Naturfreunde organization to use their beautiful grounds for the day, and we think you'll agree that the site is gorgeous and very appropriate for us. Further, we're doing the cooking this year... a first for your club. (By the way...Peter Adler is still in search of cook/server helpers for that day...his phone number is 510-845-4936). Your ten dollar admission ticket (*see page 5 for a coupon to reserve your spot...editor*) includes everything. The committee planning this event (and planning our Cotati presence as well, by the way) consists of Peter, Herb Meier, Bob Berta, Kimric Smythe, and Steve Mobia. Kudos to these fellows for all the hard work they've been doing on these events and on the dinner which we're holding in October.

One last item... we want to alert you that the Board has decided to try another location for our general meetings. We will hold our October meeting at Donworth, where you always come. But our November and December meetings will be held at the Moose Lodge in Daly City. Their facility is smaller than Donworth, but it has several advantages. Seating is at tables around a dance floor and close to a very low stage (more like a big riser). They have a large parking lot, and street parking is also available. You'll be able to purchase various drinks from their bar. And if we want food, we can bring it in and serve it there. The rent is similar to the rent at Donworth, but we can stay longer to jam if we wish. So we'll give this a two-month test or our members' reactions. We'll want to hear from you.

**August Board Meeting Synopsis**

- The Board discussed the "retreat" meeting which had been led by Gwyn Lister on August 1st. Directions for the club were revisited, and many new ideas were aired. In particular, everyone agreed that the mission for the Club, as defined in the bylaws, is desirable and appropriate, and what we all want. And therefore, we all reaffirmed our commitment to our 501C3 status with the Feds and to promoting the accordion to the general public.

- Treasurer Josephine Hornbrook reported a net expense for the month of July of \$341 and balances in the combined account at the end of that month as \$7906.

- The Nominating Committee presented its report. Since there are more candidates than offices vacant, we must hold an election. It needs to be done by mail, as there is no September meeting this year. Therefore, it was decided that we will do a mailing at the end of August. That mailing will include a ballot, a request for membership dues (due October 1), a coupon for picnic signup, and a coupon to use to signup for our annual dinner in October.

- We have reached an agreement with the Moose Lodge in Daly City and will hold general meetings there in November and December. At that point, we will make a final decision concerning our future meeting location.

Cotati Accordion Festival, Annual Club Picnic and Annual Recognition Dinner

by BAAC Events Committee

We have nothing but events coming up the next few months, and BAAC's Events Committee is looking for volunteers!

On the weekend of **August 28-29**, BAAC will have a booth at the **Cotati Accordion Festival.**, This year, we will be selling a wide variety of Hero accordions, and our new BAAC T-shirts. We have volunteers to staff the booth most of Saturday but we're still looking for volunteers from 4pm to 6pm on Saturday and throughout the day on Sunday. Shifts are only two hours, and this is a great chance to meet accordion enthusiasts from all over the world. Please contact booth manager Peter Adler for details (510)845-4936.

Our **annual picnic** will be held on **Sunday, September 20** 10am-6pm at the Nature Friends reserve on Butters Drive in the Oakland Hills, and this promises to be a big event; strolling, dancing on a large outdoor dance floor, a playground for kids and one of the most spectacular views of the Bay you've ever seen. We will be providing a barbecue lunch between noon and 2:00pm for the \$10 entry fee (includes chicken with green salad, beans, rolls, watermelon and some free beer and soft drinks - first come first served for drinks starting at noon - only included with advance ticket sales), and it should be a gala event for all comers. Kids under age 12 will be provided a free hotdog lunch. Tickets must be purchased by Sept. 10, to ensure that we have enough food. To get to the picnic use the following directions: Take Hwy 24 or Hwy 580 to Hwy 13, Hwy 13 to Joaquin Miller Rd. Exit. East on Joaquin Miller Rd. to Butters St. Turn Right on Butters Street and go 1 mile to 3115 Butters. The driveway will be to your right. Look for BAAC logo. We are still looking for daring barbecue artists to help with the cooking. Shifts are only one hour; here's your chance to impress the people who say you can't cook! Contact Herb Meier for details (650)364-5398.

On **Saturday, October 17** at 6pm, we will be holding our **Third Annual Recognition Dinner**, our chance to thank the outgoing officers and Board members for their service, and welcome the new. Our regular venue, the Irish Cultural Center at 2700-45th Ave. in San Francisco's Sunset District, provides a dance floor for our enjoyment; Frank Montoro and Herb Meier will be providing the dance music. We will also be honoring members who have made outstanding contributions to the club.

Our menu choices this year are Braised Short Ribs and Chicken Jerusalem; the price for either choice is only \$25 per person. Tickets may be purchased from any events Committee member and must be purchased by Oct. 15; contact Bob Berta for details (510)450-5766. Join us for food, dancing music and fun!

For tickets and/or information contact any of the Events Committee members:

Peter Adler (510) 845-4936

Steve Mobia (415) 587-2628

Bob Berta (510) 450-5766

Kimric Smythe (510) 215-5547

Herb Meier (650) 364-5398

BAAC Annual Picnic

Sunday, September 20, 10am-6pm

Nature Friends

3115 Butters Drive

Oakland

Come enjoy BAAC's annual picnic at a fantastic location! A full meal including barbecued chicken, salad, beans, rolls, watermelon will be provided. Some free beer and soft drinks will be provided starting at 12 noon - first come first served. Kids under 12 get a free hotdog lunch. Tickets must be purchased by September 15 to ensure food service. Join us for a full day of jamming, dancing and fellowship, with one of the greatest views of the bay.

Yes! Im attending Name: _____

Send checks made payable to BAAC to:

Phone number: _____

BAAC

31 Aliso Way

of tickets: _____

**\$10 Per Person
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Portola, Valley Calif. 94028

Accordion to Boaz

by Boaz Rubin

Accordions and Obsolescence We all know that certain older stringed instruments become tremendously valuable. The Stradivarius violin is a legendary example but there are also certain vintage guitars and mandolins that are highly valued. I am often asked if there is a corresponding category of highly prized and collectible accordions. The answer is NO. While certain Excelsiors built in New York in the 1950s and older Giuliettis from the 1950s and 1960s continue to be popular, these accordions in good condition often sell for less than \$2,000 - in most cases well below their original price (when adjusted for inflation) and certainly much less than the cost of a typical top-of-the-line new accordion or the five-figure prices that collectible instruments may command.

Why don't accordions hold their value? There are several good reasons. One is supply and demand. There were large numbers of accordions sold in the 1950s and 1960s, many of which are still around in playable condition. Until the demand for accordions began to pick up in the last few years, there was a glut of these used instruments on the market. An even more important reason has to do with the accordion aging process. A stringed instrument is basically a wooden box with no moving parts, and it will last indefinitely if properly cared for. An accordion, on the other hand, is more like your average automobile - a complicated machine that in time will begin to require labor-intensive repairs to keep it functioning well. Playing your accordion regularly and storing it properly are the best things you can do for it, but time and use will take their toll. Not playing the accordion won't save it, either. The collector who sets an accordion on the shelf just to look at will find her or his investment deteriorating from simple disuse - because the inside of the bellows will mildew and the reeds will rust if fresh air isn't pumped through the accordion on a regular basis. It's a common misconception that an accordion locked in its case is in a kind of suspended animation. That accordion stowed in the basement, attic or closet is not becoming a vintage treasure - it is rapidly losing both its value and its playability.

There is still another reason why there are no "Stradivarius" accordions around. The modern piano accordion is only about 100 years old and has continued to evolve up to the present day. Due to improved manufacturing methods and changing musical requirements, newer accordions are superior to their forebears in several ways. The keyboard of an accordion manufactured in the late 1920s had a lot in common with a piano keyboard. Its keys were long and lightweight and its action was deep. The 1920s sound was bright and brassy and the music being played was commonly dance music of all varieties from polkas to swing. These accordions were lightweight and often had three sets of reeds in the right hand and four in the left. Beginning in the mid-1930s, accordi-

ons gradually began appearing with shallower keyboard action, shorter keys, tone chambers and more reeds - four sets in the right hand and five in the left. These instruments were more suited to playing the multiple voice arrangements of classical musicians and the block chords of jazz musicians. Manufacturers began rounding the edges of the keys so that the musicians could slide around on the keyboard. By the mid-1940s, accordions with these features had entirely replaced the older style in manufacturers' top models, and musicians had developed techniques that would set the accordion apart from other keyboard instruments. The professional accordionist no longer struck the keys like a piano keyboard. His or her fingers flew across a keyboard that would respond to a mere touch. In just the last few years, accordion keyboard action has continued to get shallower and more responsive.

There have been other changes as well. Spurred on by the renewed use of accordions in dance bands, the instruments have begun to get lighter. While the full-sized accordion of the 1950s might weigh in at 28-29 lbs, the latest accordions can weigh about 10% less with the same features. And smaller accordions with big sound and good features are now being built to professional standards so that the 120 bass full-sized model may be losing its status as the standard option. The moral of the story: check out today's new accordions and you'll find some very high-quality and relevant instruments. And if you've got a used accordion that isn't being played, haul it out and turn it over to someone who will keep it alive.

Buyer's tip: Even if you are a beginning player, don't handicap yourself with a poor quality accordion. Nothing will kill your enthusiasm for playing (and practicing) like fighting with a cranky instrument that sounds bad.

Accordion answer man Boaz Rubin is a professional repairman based in Oakland. Send your accordion-care questions to Boaz care of this newsletter or e-mail Boaz at: schmatte@well.com. Boaz Accordions will have an exhibit booth at the Cotati Accordion Festival, so stop by and say hello!

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Accordion Technique Workshop

by Robert Berta

Why is it that many of the best musicians seem to just get better and better? I remember hearing pianist Vladimir Horowitz in his 90's performing so beautifully and emotionally that it would bring you to tears. Certainly virtuoso musicians don't improve without hard work, refinement of technique and attention to detail. But the methods they use are capable of providing immense dividends in your own playing.

It is important for us to try something new, to learn a new "trick", or study the nuances of music. Starting with this issue of the BAAC newsletter we will be running a regular column by guest columnists which hopefully will provide you with some "tools" to move your playing to an ever higher level.

There is an incredibly gifted resource of teachers and gifted amateurs within our club and we intend to tap these individuals for their "secrets". To kick this column off I will provide a few tips and tricks that work for me. If you have any tricks that you would like to share with your fellow members contact the editor, Bob Berta at 510-450-5766.

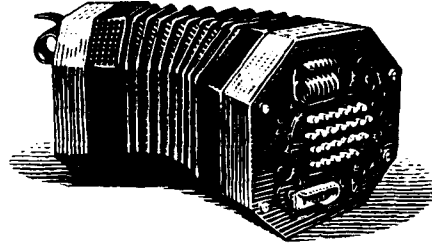
First of all, the most important lesson is never be afraid to try something new. Many times a player will develop their favorite few tunes and never try to add to their repertoire, instead being content to endlessly play the same songs. While this may be comfortable you will never grow as a musician.

While there are advantages of trying something new, there are benefits from trying something old also. All of us develop bad habits over the years whether through laziness, sloppy technique or just plain forgetfulness (hmmmm...sounds like me!). Most of us learn to play the accordion utilizing an accordion method series such as the *Palmer-Hughes* or *Sedlon* methods. I learned mainly on the *Sedlon* system and a couple of years ago I dug out all the books from book 1A to the last book in the series. I systematically forced myself to go through every single tune and exercise in the books over a period of several weeks starting with page one of book 1A. I surprised myself at how much this helped. I was able to detect and correct bad habits, freshen my knowledge of music and have a lot of fun with those old tunes.

Often accordionists get so wrapped up in the showmanship of playing that we fail to listen to the actual sound we are making. Earlier in the year many BAAC members had the opportunity to attend a workshop by Peter Soave. Before the event many wondered if they could begin to keep up with Peter who ranks among the very best in the world. You can imagine our surprise when Peter spent a good deal of time describing and illustrating how to play a single note well...how to obtain a pure sound. Next he moved into a very simple tune and had us learn to play the appropriate dynamics and make it "sing". This last item struck a familiar chord with

many of us who are in the BAAC Accordion Ensemble led by Joe Smiell. Joe is forever showing us how to make our music sing and he spends a lot of time helping us learn the nuances and dynamics of each piece of music we tackle. Consider this a plug for the BAAC Ensemble. If you really want to improve your playing you might consider joining. Joe will write musical parts to suit your skill level. More information about the ensemble and other groups is listed in the events column.

So here is your September homework...try something new, get some of your old lesson books and play through them and consider joining one of the many ensembles in the club. Stay tuned for more tricks and tips to improve your playing.



A CONCERTINA

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--John Light, accordionist for *Over the Edge*

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Contact Phone #s for Officers :

Pres. Marian Kelly (650)854-1896
Vice Pres. Frank Schlotter (510)339-8657
Treasurer Josephine Hornbrook (650)591-3009
Record. Sect. Val Kieser (510)531-4836

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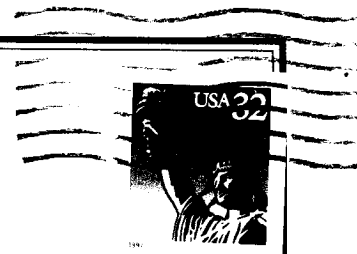
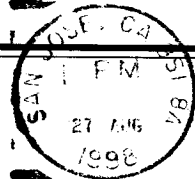
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Marian Kelly	Frank Schlotter	Josephine Hornbrook	Val Kieser

If you would like to play at a meeting contact Ed Massolo at (650)589-8409